



# Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme

**SPRING 2016**

newsletter no. 39

**AFTER THE MILD WINTER** and a very wet spell in March, the winter seems to have returned, with sub-zero temperatures at the farm some nights. Find out what this means for the work and resultant produce in **News from the Land** written by our new(ish) grower, Dom, for the first time in this issue. We have a handful of new members to welcome in **New Arrivals** and an opportunity for you to help there be more in the next issues! The visit season for the **Education Project** has started, with



*Out with the old, ready for in with the new - clearing out the purslane*

our first visit this week – see how that went here. More **Events** have been added to the calendar for this year, so check out those dates, and you can find out what has happened recently too. We have an update from **The Willows**, one of our partner projects. And as our season gets going, the members' corner and small ad sections show lots of other things that are also springing back into life or developing with the lengthening days. Look out for other news throughout this issue. We hope that we might see you at the farm over the coming season, whether it's to collect your share, come to a work morning or social event, or to attend a workshop to learn a new skill.

*Ali, April 2016*

CONTENTS	page
News from the land	- 1
New arrivals	- 3
Members wanted!	- 3
Education project	- 3
Events	- 4
2016 calendar	- 5
Things to help with	- 6
Website update & members' corner	- 6
Partner projects update:	
The Willows	- 6
Members' corner	- 7
Small ads	- 8
Flickr link and date of next newsletter	- 8

## **NEWS FROM THE LAND** – by Dom Marsh

Hello to all Canalsiders! You might have read my introduction in the last newsletter, and I have tried to meet as many members as possible on collection days, so hopefully mine is not now such an unfamiliar face to many of you. I have now been working on the land alongside Will and the team for two months, and it seems to be going fairly well as Will has decided he trusts me enough to let me write the News from the Land.

The late winter / early spring period has been defined by two factors: cold weather in February and March, and plenty of rain in March and April, which have left us slightly behind schedule, as we had very few opportunities to cultivate the land ready for the first plantings (as those who attended the spring social will know!).



*Big spring work morning -  
couch grass removal team*





*Onion planting - in the sunshine  
at the precise moment of this photo!*

However, we managed to get the first wave of field plantings (February-sown broad beans, beetroot, chard, spring onions, lettuce, kohlrabi and calabrese broccoli, and direct-drilled rocket) completed by the third week of April, so we are getting back on track. The workshare parties have also shown exceptional talents in planting onions, even in the hail, which has helped to compensate for the missed opportunity at the social.

One consequence of the very wet weather is that the polytunnels are looking good, as we have had many rainy days to spend tending them! Our early

carrots have germinated well and benefited from a work morning weeding session, the early potatoes are growing away, the nursery leeks are looking fantastic and most of the peas have sprouted before our hungry rodents nabbed the lot. Module sowings of spinach, beetroot, lettuce and spring onions have all been planted, and we have had new-season leaves to freshen up the salad including rocket, komatsuna, tatsoi and mizuna. These have helped us enjoy the abundant period known as the "spring glut", when leafy new season crops overlap with stored winter root vegetables. Unfortunately, the spring glut is of course followed by the notorious hungry gap, but with most of our early crops now in the ground we hope that no Canalside members will be going hungry...



*Work morning micro-weeding*

In the orchard, we have carried out repairs to the post-and-wire supports for the brambles and raspberries, which have been beautifully pruned and tied in by (heavily pregnant) volunteer Nanda – this work should help increase yields for the pick-your-own this summer.

One less glamorous but nonetheless essential piece of work has been the improvements to the rabbit "proof" fence around Millfield, carried out recently by Tom and Ben, with assistance in clearing the overgrowth around the boundaries from the workshare teams. So keen are our



*Tying in the blackberries*



*A 'pre-rabbit' asparagus shoot*

leporine friends on Canalside veg (understandably, if I may say so myself) that they have been conducting nightly raids on the emerging asparagus shoots! Fortunately the fence repairs and a timely application of protective mesh have put a stop to this, and we should hopefully see the asparagus strengthening this season to allow for the first harvest in 2017.

Another interesting development this season has been the progression of the hotbed system,



*Making a manure hot bed*

which the growers initiated last year. This Victorian invention involves making a big pile of fresh manure, and placing plants on top, which thrive in the heat generated by decomposition of the dung. This year we built two hotbeds in January and February; even after two months they are still warm, which has helped the solonaceae plants (tomatoes, aubergines and peppers) to thrive even in a coldish spring. Later on this year when you are enjoying a delicious Canalside tomato, please spare a thought for that steaming mound of rotting manure that helped make it all possible!

*Dom, April 2016*

## **NEW ARRIVALS...**

The winter is always a slow time for new members, so we just have a few people to welcome to Canalside this time. Read on for how you can help with recruitment over the coming season. A warm welcome to:

• *Emma Ridley* • *Jamie Maunder* • *Tom & Rachael Dimambro* •

### **Spaces available for new share members!**

We currently have shares available for new members. Please promote the 4-week trial share to friends, neighbours and colleagues. It's a great time of year to be starting a share, with all the earliest season crops beginning to appear fresh and delicious in the share! There are fliers and leaflets in the collection space – please help yourself to deliver to your street or to hand out to members of a club or group you are in. Trial shares are also available through the website, with payment through paypal or with a bank card. You are the best advert we have, so tell others about what you like about being a member of Canalside!

Open Farm Sunday on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June is a great opportunity for prospective members to come and see what we do too – there are postcards and posters available in the collection space to publicise this. Please help yourself if you have somewhere you can share them.

## **EDUCATION PROJECT – by Ali Jeffery**

The season for education visits has just restarted with our first visit of the year from a class of year 1 children from Kineton. They spent almost the whole school day at the farm: we started the day with the infamous 'toilet talk' to introduce the children to our special toilets! The day continued with a game to learn about what the vegetable plants need to grow well and which types of animals try to eat the crops *we* want to eat! We squeezed in a walk round the fields and polytunnels before lunch, to look for all the ways the growers keep the pests off the crops.



After lunch and parachute games, we continued by considering all things compost – looking at compost to find out which animals help to make compost, and a game to find things which can and can't be composted. Each child also filled a pot with potting compost and sowed bean seeds to grow at home.

We can still accommodate other visits this summer and until the end of October. Visits are free to school groups (any age), provided they last at least 2 hours and include a tour of the fields and



*A cooperative game to learn about plants' needs and crop pests*



*Using a pictorial key to identify animals in compost*

polytunnels. Bursary help may also be available to go towards the cost of transport if the visit wouldn't otherwise be possible. If you'd like to suggest this to your child's class teacher, please take a flier from the hooks by the pinboard in the collection space to pass on to the teacher.

There's another visit booked on the afternoon of Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May – if you are able to help with that visit or any future ones, please reply to the link in the weekly update/other email about visits.

## EVENTS – by Ali Jeffery

The months since the AGM have been comparatively quiet on the socials front, but in April things have started to look lively again, and the calendar for the summer months has lots going on that we hope you can come and join in with.

### *April – big spring work morning and social:*

So it should have been a day to make progress on the onion planting, but the endless rain in March meant that it wasn't possible to prepare the onion beds. Instead, the team of workers



*Post-work relaxation at the big spring social*



*Checking on the crumpets (photo: Tom Ingall)*

had a productive morning removing couch grass from the new garden plot – a task that will definitely pay off later in the year. We were joined by more people at lunchtime for soup and sunshine, with the usual range of delicious contributions that were added to the lunch table. After lunch, member Erica Moody showed a group of wannabe sourdough bakers how to use a sourdough starter for bread, crumpets and pancakes.



– *wine-making workshop:*

Our new grower, Dom Marsh, gathered together several wine batches which were at different stages in the wine-making process, to show



*Racking a batch of wine*

blueberry wine (from Scottish blueberries) went down especially well!

*May – maypole dancing and shared meal:*

A number of members of all ages came to celebrate May day and to mark International Workers' Day. Various traditional maypole dances were taught by Annabel – some quite simple with tinies as young as 2 years old joining in, and some more complex that the adults had a go at.

– *orchard social and blossom walk:*

The sun shone all day, making it the perfect weather for an afternoon of drinking tea and eating things with jams made from Canalside orchard produce! Gareth led a walk around the orchard telling members about the management of the orchard and how it was planned and established.



*Maypole merriment*

**2016 socials**

**June: Wed 1<sup>st</sup> – \* NEW \*** poetry writing workshop with Pangaea Poetry – [full info here](#)

**Sun 5<sup>th</sup>** – Open Farm Sunday tours and picnic

**Sat 18<sup>th</sup>–Sun 19<sup>th</sup>** – Peace Festival publicity stall

**Fri 24<sup>th</sup>** – pop-up café organised by member, Xandra Gilchrist

**July: Sat 16<sup>th</sup> – big summer social** – annual summer party

**Tues 19<sup>th</sup>** – jam-making workshop

**Aug: date TBC** – jam-making workshop, date to be confirmed nearer the time

**Sept: Sat 10<sup>th</sup>–Sun 11<sup>th</sup>** – Leamington Food and Drink Festival publicity stall

**Sat 17<sup>th</sup>–Sun 18<sup>th</sup> – big autumn social** – potato harvest, camping weekend, harvest meal

**Oct: Sat 1<sup>st</sup>** – apple pressing, bring a picnic, CSA open day **\*\* NB. NEW DATE \*\***

**Nov: Sat 5<sup>th</sup> – big winter social** – beetroot harvest, shared meal

**Dec: date TBC** – final social of the year **Jan: date TBC** – AGM

Additional events such as socials in the pub and skill share workshops may be added at shorter notice. Look out for these in emails to our members' mailing list and in the list of upcoming events in the weekly update.

**Want to be more involved?** If you have an idea for an event, workshop or activity that you would like to offer to other members, please get in touch with Ali to discuss possible dates ([mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk](mailto:mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk)) and for information to be sent to members.

### **Can you help tell other members what's going on at the farm?**

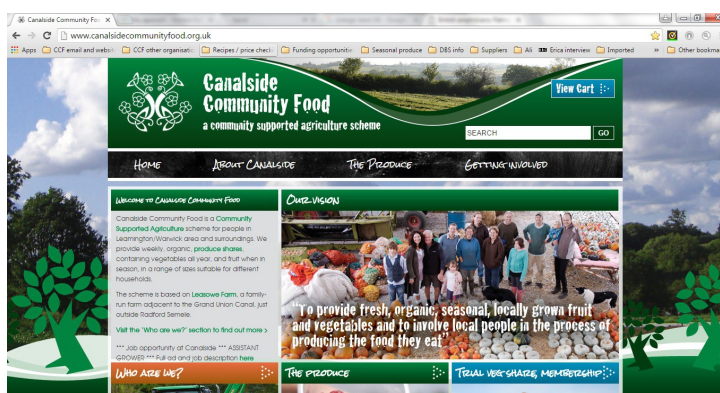
We would like to implement some of the ideas from the AGM. Can you help? Please let Ali know (on [mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk](mailto:mail@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk)) if you would be willing to help with any of the following:

- **be a buddy for a new member**, giving them a call just after they join to tell them about upcoming events, answer questions about being a member and perhaps meet them during your collection time
- **tell members about upcoming events** during a collection time/s

## **CANALSIDE WEBSITE and MEMBERS' CORNER – by Ali Jeffery**

The website has recently had an update – it was long overdue, in order to reflect the share that now contains both veg and fruit, and at times it seemed like the world wide web was conspiring against it ever being completed!

The members' corner on the website has also been updated to contain the information from the members' information booklet that you received last summer, or when you joined (if that was since the summer).



You can access the members' corner from here:

<http://www.canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk/getting-involved/members-corner/>

User name: member Password: UdxKmVBIIp5rI3Wvk97&p^I7

I hope this is a useful source of information, especially if you can't find your booklet any more! It gives information about collecting your share, making changes, cancelling your subscription, using the site and more.

## **CANALSIDE COMMUNITY FOOD - PARTNER PROJECTS' UPDATE**

### *The Willows Care Farm, by Sybil Roberson*

Nanda and Bob (the baby bump) have joined us, namaste!, and made an immaculate job of the front flower beds, where the daffodils have bloomed and the lupins are already pushing their way through the newly dug soil. Spring has sprung!

We hope your willow hearts are budding! Due to the sap rising the lower leaves will eventually perish, either release from the wire for long willow spears or leave to create a dried love heart shape. We will soon have sweet peas, calendula and poppy



*Collecting willow*





*Wednesday group weeding in the Willows garden*

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**MEMBERS' CORNER** Do you have any interesting projects, charity fund-raisers or other not-for-profit activities you'd like to promote to your fellow Canalsiders? If so, then this is the space for your free advert! Get in touch with Ali for advertising in future issues of the newsletter.

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**WORMERY FREE TO A NEW HOME** – contact Christine Fenton for more details: [christinefenton@hotmail.com](mailto:christinefenton@hotmail.com)

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**CALLING PARENTS TO BE: INFANT OBSERVATION FAMILY REQUIRED**

My name is Sam Elvyhart and I'm currently studying an MSc in Child and Adult Psychotherapy at Newman University in Birmingham. As part of my course I'm required to observe one infant age 6-12 weeks once a week for an hour. If you might be willing to let me sit quietly and observe your little one in your presence, please drop me a line at your earliest convenience at [samelvyhart@gmail.com](mailto:samelvyhart@gmail.com) or call me on 07974 556365. If wished I can supply you with a character reference from a family whose infant I currently observe.

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seedlings for sale. Angus has been developing a series of drawings of Canalside birds for blank greetings cards.

Over the past few weeks we have had a group of 8 adults from Coventry join the Friday enterprise group. They have helped us dig the foundations of the poly tunnel! At times we did think about using the new area for a swimming pool as the April showers were relentless. The group also did creative woodwork and made their own clocks and keyrings; learnt basic 'rose and castle' canal boat painting on flower pots and made balms.

The Wednesday Willows group has made gardeners' rescue hand balm, lip salve and natural body products, sales greatly supported by Canalside members, thank you! Look out for our small range of The Willows products at Gaia, too. Happy springtime!

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**MEMBERS' CORNER** continued:

## PEACE FESTIVAL

**JUNE 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>**

Are you planning to come to this year's festival? Have you ever wondered about how the whole thing is run? Or why there are certain stalls there, or who gets to choose the music, or what the workshops are all about? Maybe you've even thought you'd like a chance to get involved.....

**Well, you can!**

The Peace Festival is organised by a group of people, who have come together because they see it as something special that they want to help to happen, and anyone can get involved. After all, the more, the merrier – and the less for each person to do. There is still a chance to help this year, either beforehand or by volunteering for an hour or two on the weekend. (NB.this is above and beyond anything you may be doing for the Canalside stall!)

If you'd like to know more, email [info@peacefestival.org.uk](mailto:info@peacefestival.org.uk) or check out the website: [www.peacefestival.org.uk](http://www.peacefestival.org.uk)

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**MEMBERS' CORNER** continued: **Coventry & Warwickshire Red Rope** is a local walking group based on socialist and green ethics. **We're looking for new members and it's a great time of year to get out walking!** Locally we walk Midlands, Cotswolds, Shropshire etc. Members in Coventry, Warwick, Leamington and around. We're part of a national club with walking and mountain activities around the UK, so there is lots to join in with.

For more details contact : Email: [coventryandwarwickshire@redrope.org.uk](mailto:coventryandwarwickshire@redrope.org.uk)  
[www.redrope-warks.org.uk](http://www.redrope-warks.org.uk) (local site) [www.redrope.org.uk](http://www.redrope.org.uk) (national site)

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**SMALL ADS** Do you have any business or money-making ventures you'd like to advertise to other members of Canalside? Then this is the space for you. Please contact Ali for future adverts.

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### **Plotgate CSA Community Share Offer**

Ex Canalside members, Amy Willoughby and Dan Britton are busy setting up a CSA in Somerset-Plotgate CSA.

We Have been accepted on to the Just Growth business start-up programme, which involves raising a minimum of £15,000 in community shares. These are withdrawable shares (repayable after 3 years at the directors' discretion) which should also qualify for Social Investment Tax Relief. The Share offer funds will be matched by a loan and a grant (each of £15,000).

We are seeking investment from likeminded folk who have some spare cash with which to support this social venture. As Canalside members, we know that the benefits of CSA membership, and a desire to grow the local food movement are close to your hearts.

Please take a look at our share offer document which is available at:  
[www.plotgatecsa.wordpress.com](http://www.plotgatecsa.wordpress.com) or e-mail us for further info: [Plotgate.csa@gmail.com](mailto:Plotgate.csa@gmail.com)

Warm wishes for a fruitful season ahead,

Amy and Dan X

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### **SMALL ADS** continued



#### **Pilates Classes**

##### **Mondays at Kenilworth Golf Club**

10:00-11:00 – Improvers

19:00-20:00 – Beginners

20:00-21:00 – Intermediate

##### **Fridays at Brunswick Health Living Centre, Leamington**

09:30-10:30 – Beginners

Contact Emma for Information and Prices



[emmaboswell@virginmedia.com](mailto:emmaboswell@virginmedia.com)



[www.spacorepilates.co.uk](http://www.spacorepilates.co.uk)



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**SARA GHANCHI**  
GARDEN DESIGN  
& MAINTENANCE  
[s\\_ghanchi@hotmail.com](mailto:s_ghanchi@hotmail.com)  
07583 513663

- One-off clearances & regular weekly visits
- Experienced fruit & vegetable grower
- References from local clients available on request

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Link to our Flickr photos for a fuller selection of photos of the past 3 months:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/65686573@N02/>

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Next newsletter due out end of July 2016.

Deadline for ads with payment, and notices – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July.

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